



File Code: 1950

Date: March 28, 2003

Planning Participant,

The intent of this letter is to inform you that on March 28, 2003, Custer National Forest Supervisor Nancy Curriden signed the decision to implement the Kraft Springs Fire Hazard Abatement and Restoration Project. The project is on the Sioux Ranger District and the project area is primarily in Carter County, Montana, with a small portion in Harding County, South Dakota. The closest town is Camp Crook, South Dakota.

Alternative #2, the-Proposed Action Alternative was selected. The Selected Alternative (Alternative 2) will treat approximately 16,050 acres of stands burned by moderate and high intensity fire in the Long Pines Land Unit during the 2002 Kraft Springs Fire. Commercial salvage will occur on 6,260 acres. Noncommercial fuels reduction will occur on 1,980 acres immediately and on another 2,650 acres deferred until 2008 for wildlife snag retention and other habitat needs. Tree planting will occur on 7,800 acres to reforest units that would not be reforested naturally. Approximately 20.5 miles of temporary roads will be used to access the commercial salvage units and those temporary roads would be decommissioned after treatment activities. No new specified road construction would be needed. Road improvement would occur on main system roads in the Long Pines Land Unit. The Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzed in detail the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action (Alternative #2), and Alternative #3. The decision between alternatives was based on the analysis in the environmental assessment document, public comment, and the associated planning record files.

The Sioux Ranger District has requested from the Chief of the Forest Service an exemption from stay upon appeal. If granted, the exemption would allow portions of project to be implemented five (5) days after approval of the exemption.

This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 215.7. As stated in 36 CFR 215.11, an appeal may be filed by any person or non-Federal organization (Federal Agencies may not appeal). A written Notice of Appeal must be in writing, must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, and clearly state that it is a Notice of Appeal being filed pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Appeals must be filed at the address noted below within 45 days after the date that notice of this decision is published in the Billings Gazette, Billings, Montana. Appeals should be sent to:

**USDA, Forest Service, Northern Region
ATTN: Appeals Deciding Officer
PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807**



If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition.

Copies of the Kraft Springs Fire Hazard Abatement and Restoration EA and the complete Decision Notice/FONSI are available for review at the Sioux Ranger District Office in Camp Crook, South Dakota, and at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Billings, Montana. In addition the complete EA and the DN/FONSI, including project color maps are available on the Custer NF website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer/>. The supporting Project Record, which includes the internal scoping, public involvement, specialist reports, and road management plan, is available for review at the Sioux Ranger District Office.

For further information on this decision, contact George Foley, District Ranger, or John Clark, Project Leader, Sioux Ranger Station, Camp Crook, South Dakota (605-797-4432).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Foley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GEORGE FOLEY
District Ranger